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THE

PRESENT STATE OF THE CULTIVATION

OF

ORIENTAL LITERATURE.

A LECTURE

DELIVERED AT A MEETING

OF

THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

BY THE DIRECTOR,

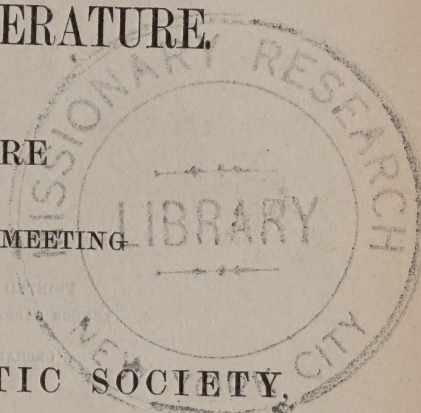
PROFESSOR H. H. WILSON, 1786-1860

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LECTURE
ON THE
PRESENT STATE OF THE CULTIVATION
OF ORIENTAL LITERATURE.

BY
PROFESSOR H. H. WILSON,

DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

[*Delivered January 24th, 1852.*]

It has been judged possible, by the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society, that the objects for which the Society was founded, and for which it is maintained, may be made more generally known, and more accurately appreciated, by the adoption of arrangements of a more popular character than our ordinary proceedings, and which may interest a more numerous and varied portion of the public than the Members of the Society only, in matters concerning the Eastern World. It is not to be denied that the subjects which in a peculiar degree engage the attention of the Society,—the antiquities and literature of the nations of the East,—have hitherto failed to receive that attention from the public at large which might have been expected, if not from their own inherent interest, yet from our long and intimate intercourse with the most important countries of Asia, and the political identification of India and Great Britain. Works of high merit, elucidating Oriental literature, history, antiquities, religion, the conditions of Asiatic society in past or present times, and descriptive of the products of art or nature in the East, usually meet with a cold and discouraging reception, even from the reading world, or at most attract passing and ephemeral notice, leaving no durable impression, creating no continuous and progressive interest. It is with the hope of applying some corrective to this state of indifference, and of extending and keeping alive some permanent feeling of interest in the East, and in India especially, that the Society has determined to try the experiment of widening the sphere of its operations, by inviting the attendance of those friends and associates, who, without having time or opportunity to pursue independent inquiry, may be well disposed to accept such general information, as those members of the Society, who are more or less assiduously occupied in exploring the sources of that information, may be in a condition to communicate through the medium of an

occasional lecture. The Society also invites the assistance of other qualified individuals who are not associates, but who, from the incidental direction of their studies, may be in possession of interesting results connected with the East in general, and India in particular, in those departments of knowledge which other institutions and societies have been established to cultivate.

The multiplication of literary and scientific associations, whilst it has had the effect of spreading over a wider surface the accumulating treasures of intellectual acquirements, and so far contributed to their more universal currency, has, at the same time, been detrimental to their collective aggregation in one comprehensive and easily accessible repository. In the case of our Society, for instance, a variety of communications on subjects within its especial province, the geography, geology, statistics, numismatics, even the literature and antiquities of India, are to be found, not where they would most naturally be looked for, in the pages of an Asiatic Journal, specifically dedicated to the illustration of India in all its relations, but scattered through the several journals of as many societies as there are subjects of investigation. The Royal Asiatic Society contemplates these excursive divergences of its natural resources with no unfriendly feeling. So long as the public are put in possession of desirable knowledge through an appropriate channel, it matters little which medium is preferred; and the more popular the medium, the wider its circulation, the more advantageous its selection. Without interfering, however, or wishing in any way to interfere with the spontaneous choice of the channels through which contributors to our knowledge of the East may deem fit to communicate their inquiries to the public, it has appeared to the Council of the Asiatic Society practicable to combine the advantages of publication in other journals with a less formal and lasting communication of the subjects of such publications to the occasional meetings of this Society. A popular and general view in this place of topics more fully illustrated elsewhere, will not detract from the value of the published details; and the oral notice of any new and interesting circumstances relating to the East, which may be submitted to such an assemblage as the present, will not in the least impair the usefulness or interest of the same matter when given to a totally different meeting, or when assuming its state of typographical immortality. The Council, therefore, hope that they may expect the aid in this form—in the form of an occasional lecture—of the associates even of kindred societies, when their researches may chance to take a direction which falls within the legitimate precincts of the Asiatic Society, within which

they may reasonably expect to meet with many who will take a lively concern in the same subjects, and some who may be qualified by their own knowledge and experience to contribute to their more complete and entire elucidation. In plain terms, the Council hope that the Society will be favoured occasionally by a lecture on subjects connected with India and the East by gentlemen who are not enrolled in the list of its members.

That such valuable assistance will very materially promote the success of the arrangement I entertain no doubt; but I owe it to myself to announce that I am not so sanguine as some of my colleagues as to the general result, or the possibility of popularising Oriental subjects by a course or courses of lectures upon them. There are some branches of the plant which the Society is engaged to cultivate, which may flourish under this treatment. The products of nature, vegetable or mineral, especially those which have a commercial value, may attract attention; and countries and nations new to European geography may excite some interest: but those subjects which are purely literary—the languages, the literature, the institutions, the religions, of the Eastern world—can scarcely be rendered interesting by so summary a proceeding, as they cannot interest where they are not understood, and cannot be understood where they are not studied: they require previous training. Not only are they unfamiliar in themselves, and strange to the tenor of European thought, but the language in which alone they can be described is unknown, the terms are unintelligible, the names of persons, the denominations of things, are sounds so unlike anything to which the European ear and eye are accustomed, that they are like inarticulate babbling or hieroglyphic signs—make no definite impression—and leave no perdurable recollection. Without any precise notion of the names, we can have no sympathy with the persons, and the gods and heroes of Hindu and Persian mythology and fable pass before the eyes like misty shadows, of whose outline we have no distinct conception, in whose substantiality we have no belief. It is impossible, therefore, to take a real interest in the literature of which they are the ornaments and the essence. Few have a greater interest than I have to wish that it were otherwise, as it is the great and, I fear, insuperable bar in the way of the popularity of a department of Hindu literature which I have taken some pains to recommend to popular acceptance—the Theatre of the Hindus—and which has many claims on the sympathy of cultivated taste. I despair, however, of hearing the appellation of the *dramatis personæ*—Pururavas, Urvasi, Sakuntala, Vasantesena, Chandragupta,—enunciated smoothly and familiarly

by the lips of my countrymen, or rather—for such is indispensable to perfect popularity—the lips of my countrywomen; and yet, until the names are familiar, the incidents in which the persons are involved cannot produce a very lively or lasting impression.

Notwithstanding, however, this difference of opinion, and notwithstanding a strong personal reluctance to take an active part in the arrangement, from an unfeigned conviction that the period has gone by when I might have brought unimpaired energies to the undertaking, I have been prevailed upon, by the representations of my colleagues, to assume the initiative, and set an example which I doubt not will be more worthily followed. I propose, on the present occasion, to take a brief and necessarily superficial survey of the labours of Oriental scholars during the last year or two, in various parts of the world, especially in connexion with the objects of the Royal Asiatic Society.

Man and Nature in the East are the objects of the researches of the Royal Asiatic Society, as they were those originally proposed upon the institution of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta by Sir Wm. Jones. The East, however, is a relative term, and its limits in regard to Oriental literature are not capable of geographical precision. European Turkey, Africa, and Egypt come within the literary designation, in as far as their literature is of Mohammedan or Semitic origin; whilst the antiquities of Egypt have an Orientalism of their own. The hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt are not foreign to the objects of the Royal Asiatic Society; but it has so happened that none of its members have engaged, publicly at least, in their investigation, and no communications on the subject form part of its proceedings. The omission is of the less importance, as it is more than supplied by the labours of other societies, especially the Royal Society of Literature, and the Syro-Egyptian Society. Of late, however, the subject has been taken under the especial patronage of the King of Prussia, not only by the establishment of a magnificent museum at Berlin, for the preservation and display of precious monuments of Egyptian art, but to the equally splendid publication of the engravings of the monuments of Egypt and Ethiopia, collected by Professor Lepsius on his mission to Egypt—a work still in progress. We are indebted to the same eminent scholar for a profound work on Egyptian chronology, and to a no less distinguished individual, who combines the character of a man of letters with that of a statesman—Chevalier Bunsen—for the place which Egypt occupies in the history of the world. The continental journals are rich in contributions, which, although of minor importance, are of great value in the elucidation of

Egyptian antiquity, although they still leave the perusal of the innumerable legends of the tombs and temples enveloped in considerable uncertainty, affording ample scope for the exercise of learning, patience, and ingenuity. The less remote literature of Egypt has received some valuable accessions in the Coptic Grammar of Schwartze, published after his death by Steinthal; and in an interesting work on the doctrines of the Gnostic sect—the *Pistis sophia*—in Coptic, prepared for publication by the same scholar, and edited by Petermann.

It is unnecessary in this place to expatiate upon the prominent position assumed by our Society in laying before the public some of the most important results of antiquarian research in the countries near in succession to Egypt—Syria, Mesopotamia, and Persia. The minute and scrupulously careful manner in which Colonel Rawlinson has decyphered and translated the inscriptions of Bisitun and other places in Persia in which cuneiform, wedge-shaped, or as they were formerly termed, arrow-headed characters, express the Persian language of the time of Darius, (the sixth century B.C.) has perfected the labours of preceding investigators, as Grotefend, Burnouf, Lassen, and Westergaard, and given a fresh impulse and example to those of his cotemporaries, Hincks, Benfey, Holzmänn, De Sauley, Oppert, and others. In all we find a general acquiescence in his conclusions with such modifications as are to be expected from the novelty of the subject and the exercise of competing and independent scrutiny. Of some of the variations suggested by Oppert especially, whose examination of the Bisitun inscription, published in the *Journal Asiatique*, is not yet terminated, Colonel R. observes that they originate in his having taken for his criticism the original translation only, and systematically ignored many corrections and etymological illustrations contained in the *Vocabulary* subsequently published in our *Journal*. It is some excuse, however, for this imperfect criticism, that Colonel Rawlinson's *Vocabulary* is far from completed, not more than about a half being in print; and scholars are not yet even in entire possession of his ultimate conclusions.

Arduous as is the task of decyphering the Persian inscriptions, a much more difficult enterprise demands the utmost efforts of those scholars who have devoted their attention to the subject in the interpretation of the numerous legends preserved by the monuments of the Assyrian empire; those which were first brought to light by M. Botta, and subsequently by Mr. Layard, in the adjacent, although not exactly the same, situations of Khorsabad, Nimrud, and Kuyunjik, once comprised possibly within the extensive limits, or at least the suburban dependencies of Nineveh, which are now accumulated in vast

abundance in the great national museums of France and England, and which have been made still more widely known, and generally accessible by the splendid illustrations published by the French Government, the Monuments of Nineveh, in five large folios, from the drawings of M. Botta, and a more miscellaneous work, comprehending the antiquities as well as the actual scenery and costumes of Persia, by Messrs. Flandin and Coste—a work still in progress; also by the published selection from Mr. Layard's drawings, and by a valuable series of inscriptions, printed under the authority of the Trustees of the British Museum. Interesting and curious, however, as may be the monuments and relics, which are very properly protected from further decay in the museums where they are enshrined, it is obvious that as long as they are merely dumb memorials of antiquity—as long as they tell us no story except such as we may loosely guess at—as long as they render no testimony to positive facts, they are little more than the wonders of a moment, exciting transient emotions of surprise, and suggesting vague notions of the past, which leave little permanent impression and contribute little to actual knowledge. It is not until they can be made to speak, to utter intelligible words, that they are of real value; and it is to give them a voice—to compel them to reveal the secrets of which they are the only deposit, that the magic powers of philology and erudition are assiduously devoted.

Foremost amongst the scholars engaged in this inquiry, our ingenious and indefatigable countryman Colonel Rawlinson has employed and has furnished to his contemporaries the only practical clue to the interpretation of the Assyrian legends. In many parts of Persia, whether graven on rocks as at Hamadan and Bisitun, or on the walls of palaces as at Persepolis, where the inscriptions of the Achæmenidan princes occur, they occur in triplicate. One is in the same character as that which Colonel Rawlinson has so successfully deciphered; one is in a rather differently modified although equally a cuneiform letter, expressing a different language, to which the name of Median or Scythian has been applied, but the exact value of which is not yet determined; the third is in the same or a similarly modified cuneiform character, which is used on the sculptures of Nimrud and Khorsabad. Now it is an obvious inference that this third or Assyrian inscription repeats or translates the first, or Persian inscription, and this inference becomes a positive conclusion by the recurrence in the same parts, of groups which in the Persian designate proper names, the names of persons and places, or certain phrases, as “says Darius the king,” and the like. By a careful collation of these parallel passages and the application of judicious conjecture, based upon pre-

vious knowledge of the languages likely to have been in use at the time, a certain number of corresponding letters or characters are verifiable and have been attempted to be verified. Other sources of probable inference, explained by Colonel Rawlinson in a memoir read to the Society the year before last, extended his command of the Assyrian alphabet to about 150 characters and a stock of about 500 words, with which he was enabled to propose a consistent and tolerably complete translation of the inscription upon the obelisk brought from Nimrud, and at subsequent periods translations of inscriptions from other monuments and the published tables of Botta, Layard, and the British Museum. Scholars in this country and on the continent have engaged actively in the same pursuit, especially Dr. Hincks in the *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, and in our *Journal*, and Mr. Sharpe in the proceedings of the Syro-Egyptian Society; M. De Sauley, in memoirs read before the French Academy, or separately published; by Signor Luzzato of Pavia; M. Stern of Göttingen, and by Messrs. Grotefend, Loewenstern, Holzmänn, Arndt, and Hoefer. The conclusions of these different inquirers are, as we might expect in this early stage of the investigation, somewhat at variance. According to Colonel Rawlinson the language of the Assyrian inscriptions, although neither Hebrew, nor Chaldean, nor Syriac, presents so many points of analogy to them that it may be determinately classed among the members of the Semitic family. Dr. Hincks and M. De Sauley entertain the same opinion, and so does M. Stern, although he reads every word differently from De Sauley, except the proper names. On the other hand, Signor Luzzato maintains that the language belongs to the Indo-Germanic family. With respect to the characters Colonel Rawlinson considers them as partly phonetic, distinguishable as simply alphabetic or as syllabic, and partly ideographic or monogrammatic, certain signs being used to convey the ideas, for instance, of God, the sun, the moon, a son, without expressing a sound, bearing in this respect a decided analogy to the Egyptian system of writing, from which it was probably derived. These opinions are in concurrence with those of Dr. Hincks, and, indeed, to some extent originated with him. De Sauley thinks that the characters were originally syllabic, but had become alphabetic, retaining numerous traces of their origin. Luzzato controverts their analogy to Egyptian, and Stern maintains that the writing is entirely alphabetic; and although he admits the existence of homophones, or words with the same sound but different meanings, he denies the presence of ideographic characters.

Like differences prevail with regard to the names of princes and

dynasties supposed to be decypherable; according to Colonel Rawlinson the oldest monuments belong to the twelfth or thirteenth century B.C., and he ascribes them to Asar-adan-pul, or Sardanapalus. The inscriptions also, according to him, refer to kings of a still earlier dynasty, whose names he reads Temenbar the First, Hevenk, and a third doubtful. The son of Assar-adan-pul he calls Temenbar the Second, whose exploits are recorded in the obelisk inscription. His son is named Husi-hem, or Shemir-hem, and his grandson Hevenk the Second. A later dynasty built or embellished the palaces of Khorsabad, of whom Colonel Rawlinson first read the names Arko-tsin, Beladonim-sha, and Assar-adan; but he latterly concurred in the more generally adopted opinion that the kings named are those of the Bible history, Sargon or Shalmeneser, Sennacherib, and Esar-haddon. In inscriptions on slabs, subsequently sent home by Mr. Layard, Colonel Rawlinson also read the names of Hezekiah, Jerusalem, and Judæa; in the Babylonian spelling—Khazakiyahu, Urusalimma, and Yahuda. Very recently Dr. Hincks has decyphered the name of Menahem, king of Samaria, upon the obelisk inscription, and that of Jehu,* son of Omri. Grotefend alone brings down the time of the obelisk to the Biblical period, the seventh and eighth centuries B.C., and reads the name which Rawlinson made Temenbar, Shalmeneser. Hoefer takes an entirely different view of the whole subject, and maintains that the monuments of Nimrud and Khorsabad are entirely Persian works of the Achæmenidan, Arsakian, and Sassanian kings, or from the sixth century before to the sixth century after Christ, founding his conclusion upon the prophetic denunciations of the Old Testament, foretelling the utter and perpetual desolation of Nineveh. Amidst these differences there is one conclusion which seems to be without dispute: the invariable occurrence of the name of Nebuchadnezzar on the bricks which are found for a considerable distance north and south of Baghdad, and of which numbers are to be found in most collections. Colonel Rawlinson observes that he has examined an infinite number of them, and never found any other legend than that of Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopalsar. Other concurrences will probably be established when the key, furnished by Colonel Rawlinson

* Communications received from Colonel Rawlinson, subsequently to the delivery of this lecture, one of which was read at the meeting of the Society of the 6th March, announce his having also independently read the same name, that of Jehu, in the inscription; and, in fact, he had long before read the same name on the obelisk, as *Yahua*, son of *Hubiri*, but he was then at a loss to identify the individual.—See *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, XII., p. 447.

from the collation of the Assyrian inscription at Bisitun with the Persian, is fully at the command of oriental scholars. The fourteenth number of our Journal, recently published, is occupied by the transcript of this inscription at Bisitun, and of detached inscriptions of the same class, either there or at Nakshi Rustam, accompanied by a verbal Latin translation, which is vindicated by an elaborate analysis of each group of characters as far as to the end of the first column, and by the commencement of a memoir on the alphabet. The return of Colonel Rawlinson to Baghdad has prevented him from proceeding further at present; but we may expect the completion of the work in due time: in the mean while he has added to his analysis a vocabulary of 246 characters; their forms, their phonetic powers, and ideographic values, remarking at the same time the list does not pretend to be complete or perfect. That it will be of essential service as it is cannot be doubted, and with the multiplication of facilities as well as of materials, and the continued and persevering exertions of the scholars who have entered upon the subject, we may hope that the perplexities by which they are at present evidently embarrassed will be overcome, and that we may yet glean from the monuments of Nineveh a probable outline of the annals of Assyria and Babylon.

In connexion with the ancient history of Persia the cultivation of the Zend language continues to be assiduously pursued abroad. The doubts thrown by Sir William Jones upon the authenticity of the Zend-avesta as translated by Anquetil du Perron, and shared in by Erskine and Vans Kennedy, have rendered the subject distasteful to English orientalists; and the Rev. Dr. Wilson of Bombay is the only labourer in this field, in which his professional avocations tend to limit his operations to controversial literature. The same doubts have never been admitted on the continent, and the study has never wanted cultivators. At the head of them is M. Burnouf of Paris, whose *Commentaire sur le Yaçna*, in which a Zend work is illustrated by a Sanscrit translation, throws important light upon the religion and religious language of the Parsis. We owe to him also a lithographed copy of the *Vendidad Sade*, of which an edition has been recently printed in Roman characters at Leipsic, by Professor Brockhaus, accompanied by a glossary, which will be of essential utility to students, and is of great interest as affording a ready means of comparison between Zend and Sanscrit. Two editions of all the Zend works which are procurable have been announced, one by M. Westergaard of Copenhagen, a young Danish scholar, who a few years since undertook a voyage to Bombay, and a journey thence to Yezd, in Persia, to perfect his knowledge of Zend; following the example set

by his learned countryman Professor Raske, whom some of us may remember to have seen in India engaged in a like undertaking. The other edition is in preparation at Erlangen, by Dr. Spiegel, who is advantageously known by his writings on subjects connected with the literature and traditions of the Parsis. Professor Lassen is also at work upon an edition of the Vendidad. These publications must contribute to the preparation of a grammar of the Zend, which is still a desideratum, and to the settlement of the question of its authenticity; for although with the evidence of the Achæmenidan inscriptions we cannot question that there was in use in Persia in the reign of Darius a language very much the same as the Zend, yet the sacred writings of the Parsis abound with questionable passages, and present a very suspicious affinity to Sanscrit. There does, indeed, appear to have been a very early and intimate intercourse between the Parsi worshippers of fire and the Brahmans. The Magas—the Magi—are recognised in the Puranas as a caste of Brahmans, and as the privileged priests of a celebrated temple of the sun at Multan. The subject has been yet scarcely touched upon, and its further investigation may be recommended to the attention of our countrymen in the Punjab, who are favourably circumstanced for ascertaining if any remains or traditions of the worship of the sun are still to be discovered in that quarter.

Another language or dialect considered by the Parsis as sacred—the Pehlevi—has lately received some illustration by the publication of the Bundelesh by Mr. Westergaard. This has been usually regarded as the form of speech current under the Sassanian kings, or from the second century of the Christian era to the Mohammedan conquest of Persia. The coins of those princes bear legends in the Pehlevi character, and the same continued in use for some time after the conquest, as our colleague, Mr. Thomas, has so satisfactorily shown in his Memoirs on the Parthian Coins in the Numismatic Journal, and on the Coins of the Mohammedan Governors of Persia, in our Journal. Inscriptions in the same sort of characters are also found on rocks, accompanying sculptured figures, which unmistakeably represent the defeat and capture of Valentinian by the Persian monarch Shahpur. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the Persian of that time was written in a *quasi* Pehlevi character; but it nevertheless appears doubtful if the language was the Pehlevi of the Parsi books. At any rate, it is clear that the language of the inscriptions is not the same, for they have not yet been interpreted; and ability to read the books does not confer ability to read the inscriptions. It is this which has chiefly induced Mr. Westergaard to express some

hesitation in recognising the authenticity of the Parsi Pehlevi, and he is disposed to consider it as a fabricated form of speech, founded on more modern Persian. That the Parsis of India are not unfamiliar with the art of constructing out of the living Persian a form of speech which they pretend to be of a more ancient origin, we know from the *Dasatir*, the language of which, as soon as it was published at Bombay, was shown by the late Colonel Lockett, and by our colleague, Mr. Atkinson to be a fabrication. An ingenious writer in the *Asiatic Journal*—Mr. Henry Norris—proved the same; and the question was placed beyond doubt by the concurrence of Mr. Erskine: at the same time, it is not unlikely that the Persian language adopted some modifications, intermediate between its form in the reign of Darius and that used by Firdusi—an interval of fifteen centuries—and of one of which, called Parsi, we have had very lately published a grammar and specimens by Dr. Spiegel. The author considers this to have been the language of Persia, between the genuine Pehlevi of the Sassanians and the Persian of the *Shah-nama*; it is used in the translation of the *Zend-avesta*, and is written sometimes with Zend, and sometimes with Arabic letters—the writings being later than the speech. The Parsi is essentially the same with modern Persian, but offers peculiarities sufficient to constitute it a distinct dialect. The dialects of Persia have hitherto been uninvestigated; but we have evidence of their existence in the enumerations of Mohammedan writers, who speak of the Haravi, Chaghzi, Savuli, and Soghdi, as well as the Deri, Pehlevi, and Parsi, as languages of Persia. Those dialects which have been furthest removed from the influence of Arabic, as those on the bordering provinces on the east and north—Karman, Yazd, Seistan, Mazenderan, and Ghilan—are well entitled to inquiry, as they would probably show the steps by which Achæmenidan Zend, and Sassanian Pehlevi came to be the Persian of the Courts of Ispahan and Teheran.

The modern literature of Persia has not received equal attention with the ancient; but it has not been overlooked. Translations of the *Bostan* of Sadi in German verse, and of a portion of the *Masnavi*, have been published by Messrs. Graf and Rosen; and Professor Vullers, of Giessen, has finished his *Institutiones Linguae Persicæ cum Sanscrita et Zendica comparatæ*. Dr. Dorn has published the text and translations of the histories of Tabaristan and Sarbadar, from the *Habib-us-Sair* of Khondemir, and the text of a history of Tabaristan, Ruyan, and Mazenderan, by Zahir-ud-din. In this country, some, although not much, progress has been made by the Text Society in printing the works of Jami, by the text of *Salámán* and *Absál*, edited

by Mr. Falconer. Editions of the Akhlaki Mohsani, Anwari Soheili, and Gulistan have been published by Professors Ouseley and Eastwick, for the use chiefly of the students of the East India College. An improved edition of Professor Johnson's Persian Dictionary is far advanced. The Journal of the Society last published has an article on the Persian Game of Chess, by our colleague Mr. Bland, from original authorities, in which is described a much more complicated form of the game than that which exhausts the patience of any except chess-players, played with fifty-six pieces on a board of a hundred and ten squares. Mr. Bland has also questioned the hitherto received tradition of the Indian origin of the game. As far as has been ascertained, there is no original authority for this; but it is not an Indian—it is a Persian tradition, and so far disinterested, that it is not the invention of national vanity. Mr. Bland has also given us a century of Persian odes—ten from the collections of as many celebrated poets, and all, with one exception, hitherto unedited.

The cultivation of Arabic literature has been always prosecuted with greater zeal and efficiency on the Continent than in this country; and the great names of Golius, Erpenius, and De Sacy are there not without worthy successors. With exception of the translation of the Makamat Hariri, by Mr. Preston, we have nothing to offer in this rich field of Oriental literature; whilst the presses of Germany and France are incessantly at work on both texts and translations. Professor Weil, of Heidelberg, has completed his history of the Khalifs—a work that well deserves rendering into English. To the industry of Professor Wüstenfeldt, of Göttingen, we owe the texts of Ibn Kotaiba's general history—a supplement to the biographical dictionary of Abu Zakaria al Nawawi, and a tract on the genealogies of the Arab tribes, by Mohammed Ibn Habib. The first volume of Shaharastani's account of religious and philosophical sects, of which the text was edited for the Text Society by the Rev. Mr. Cureton some time since, has been translated at Halle by Haarbrucker. The travels of Ibn Batuta have been translated by M. de Fremery; but a more extensive and important work is the text of the history of the Berbers, by Ibn Khaldun, edited by M. de Slane, and published at Algiers by order of the Government of France: a translation is to follow. The history of the Arab tribes who settled in Northern Africa, and of the Berber dynasties who preceded them, is but one portion of the great work of Abdurrahman Ibn Mohammed Ibn Khaldun, a native of Tunis, born in the fourteenth century, who filled various high offices in the service of the Sultans of Tunis, Morocco, Granada, and Cairo; and who nevertheless found leisure, in the course of a life of seventy-

four years, to write a series of important historical works, preceded by a discussion on the progress of civilization and the elements of social organisation—a remarkable work, when we advert to the state of historical composition in the cotemporary Christian nations. The text and a translation of this portion, with notes by M. Quatremere, has been some time in the press. The encouragement given by the French Government to the publication of the part which relates to the Berbers, is entitled to the credit of the wise as well as liberal policy of directing the learning and industry of competent scholars to the elucidation of the past condition of those races which have been subdued by the arms of France, and are subject to its rule.

The history of the Arabs of Spain for which we have been hitherto dependent upon authorities utterly worthless, with one exception, the translation of Al-Makkari, by Senhor Gayangos, continues, through the industry of M. Dozy, to accumulate trustworthy materials for its accurate illustration in the collection of original Arabic works on Spanish history. M. Dozy has also commenced their application to the end for which they are being collected in his *Récherches sur l'Histoire Politique et Littéraire de l'Espagne pendant le Moyen Age*; the first volume of which is published, and contains a variety of interesting statements by both Christian and Mohammadan writers.

Mohammadan Law and Jurisprudence have been illustrated by the continuation of M. Perron's translation of the work of Khalil Ibn Ishak, and Mr. Baillie's Law of Purchase and Sale, chiefly from the *Fatawa Alemgiri*. The text and translation of the Algebra of Omar Alkhayani, by M. Woepcke, shows the Arabs to have far surpassed their masters the Greeks in this branch of mathematics, and the same superiority is claimed for them in general by M. Sedillot, in his *Matériaux pour servir à l'Histoire comparée des Sciences Mathématiques chez les Grecs et les Orientaux*. M. Woepcke has also published in the number of the *Journal Asiatique* last received the text and translation of two mathematical tracts, which purport to be translations from the Greek of Euclid, the originals of which are lost. Various publications, texts, and translations of Arabic works, especially on Grammar and Lexicology, have been printed on the Continent, which time will not allow me to notice in detail; but which prove the great interest taken everywhere, except in England, in this department of Oriental literature. I cannot, however, dismiss the subject without adverting to a work recently received from Vienna, the *History of the Literature of the Arabs*, by the indefatigable patriarch and pattern of orientalists the Baron von Hammer Purgstall, who after more than half a century of industry even more than

German, comes forward in his seventy-sixth year with two portly quarto volumes, constituting the first of a series of some ten or twelve volumes, in which the history of Arabic literature is to be narrated from its beginning in the century before Mohammed to the end of the twelfth century of the Hijra, or from the sixth to the nineteenth century of the Christian era. The two volumes now published comprise only the three first centuries of the Hijra, but they contain notices of 830 authors, and short extracts from their compositions. We may judge from what is thus accomplished what remains to be done, and we can only hope that the venerable author will have health and length of days to complete an undertaking which so worthily crowns the labours of a life devoted with never-failing zeal and inexhaustible enthusiasm to the literature of the Mohammadan world.

Continental scholars have not been neglectful of the other principal division of the Mohammadan races—the Turks; and we have an anthology published by Peifer at Hirschberg, in Silesia, and the *Bibliothèque d'Historiens Orientaux* of Beresina, the first part of which contains the *Shaibani-nama*, a history of the Mongols, and the second a Tatar translation of the *Jami-al-Tawarikh*; the following volumes will continue the illustrations of the early history of the Turk tribes. It cannot but be thought somewhat extraordinary that so long and so intimately as this country has been connected politically with the Ottoman empire, such a total neglect should have been exhibited of the Turkish language and literature: we have been hitherto dependent, even for personal communication with the officers of the Government, to Greek or Syrian dragomans, or more correctly Tarjuman or translators, and although some few years since a move was made by the British Government to provide a less exceptionable class of qualified interpreters, the project has been but imperfectly carried out, and the most confidential communications are still at the mercy of foreigners who are not even British subjects. As to the literature, for any information on that subject we must repair to Paris, St. Petersburg, or Vienna. We have no later history of the Turks even than that of Knolles, which is now 150 years old, and which, notwithstanding Dr. Johnson's panegyric, can scarcely be regarded as an authority, as the writer understood neither Arabic nor Turkish. Yet in all probability a proposal to publish in an abridged form a translation of Von Hammer's great History of the Turks would meet with no encouragement from the representatives of the reading public, the publishers and booksellers.

A like apathetic indifference prevails in this country with regard to the less important but not valueless or uninteresting forms of

oriental speech that are current on the confines of Turkey, Russia, and Persia. As observed by the latest editor and translator of the Armenian chronicle of Moses of Chorene, Professor De Florival, the brothers Whiston, above a century ago, astonished the learned world by their translation of the Armenian chronicle ; but there the effort ceased, and Armenian has had no subsequent attraction for English orientalists. Georgian is equally untouched. The name of Ossetic is scarcely known, although its affinity to Sanscrit renders it a peculiarly interesting Caucasian dialect. For all these we must refer to Continental scholars. Something more has been effected in Syriac through the industry of the Rev. Mr. Cureton and Dr. Lee, but they have worthy competitors abroad in Professor Bernstein of Breslau, and Professor Thullberg of Upsala in Sweden.

Thanks to the enlightened policy of the Court of Directors of the East India Company, which encourages every feasible attempt to render the various languages of India acquirable by their servants, and to make the various races of India known to all the world in their past as well as present social condition, through their literature, their institutions, their laws, their traditions, their remains, we make a better figure in all that relates to the Hindus especially, than in what concerns the Mohammadan people, whether natives of India or of other countries of the East. In this country the publication of the text of the Rig-veda, the first and most important of the four Vedas or Scriptural authorities of the Hindus, constitutes an epoch in the history, not only of the Hindu religion, but in that of the religious systems of the whole ancient world. The first volume is printed, the second is advanced ; it will be completed in two, or at most three, more volumes. The second Veda also, the Yajur-veda, is in progress. The Rig-veda is printed entirely at the cost of the Company, and they contribute liberally to that of the Yajur. They have, it is true, been obliged to avail themselves of the service of German scholars as editors, the Rig Veda being printed at Oxford under the editing of Dr. Maximilian Müller, and the Yajur under that of Dr. Albrecht Weber, at Berlin ; but they are entitled to the credit of preserving these venerable works from destruction, and of placing them within the reach of European erudition, as without their aid it is not likely that these Vedas would ever have been printed. Of the third, or Sama Veda, a portion, constituting its text, was printed by the Oriental Text Society some years since, from a MS. furnished by the Rev. Mr. Stevenson ; and a translation, by the same, was published by the Translation Fund Committee. But a more carefully prepared edition, with a German translation, and a copious glossary, has been more

recently published at Göttingen by Professor Benfey. The fourth Veda, the Atharva, has not yet found an editor. Supplementary works, illustrative of the texts of the Vedas, have been published on the Continent, particularly the Nirukta, an original glossary and comment, by Professor Roth, of Tübingen, who is the author of several learned dissertations on the literature and history of the Vedas, published in the Journal of the German Oriental Society, and other literary periodicals. In his *Etudes sur les Hymnes du Rig Veda*, and his *Essai sur le Mythe des Ribhavas*, Professor Neve, of Louvain, has speculated upon the early periods of Hindu society in a strain which, although perhaps not always incontrovertible, is recommendable, by its general correctness and its animated eloquence, to the perusal of those who do not make the subject a study, but who would willingly receive some information respecting it. There still remains, however, a vast body of literature subsidiary to the texts of the Vedas, the investigation of which is essential to their being rightly and thoroughly understood, and which offer a field not easily exhausted to the diligence of rising Sanscrit scholars. When, however, the texts of the Rig and Yajur Vedas are completed, we shall be in the possession of materials sufficient for the safe appreciation of the results to be derived from them, and of the actual condition of the Hindus, both political and religious, at a date coeval with that of the yet earliest known records of social organisation—long anterior to the dawn of Grecian civilisation—prior to the oldest vestiges of the Assyrian empire yet discovered—coteremporary probably with the oldest Hebrew writings, and posterior only to the Egyptian dynasties, of which, however, we yet know little except barren names; whilst the Vedas give us abundant information respecting all that is most interesting in the contemplation of antiquity. They give us also reason to think that all speculation with regard to the origin of the religious systems of the ancient world, has been hitherto constructed upon unstable foundations; and (limiting their results within a narrower sphere) they establish the important fact, that the belief and practices of the people of India in the present day have no warrant from those writings upon which they have hitherto maintained them to be based. The religion of the Vedas and that of the Brahmanical Hindus of the present day are totally different things. Enough has already assumed a European garb to justify these assertions, although we must have the whole before us before we can venture to affirm positively, before we can justly appreciate all the results which a thorough acquaintance with the originals is likely to establish: a few years will probably enable us to form a safe and sound judgment. The first part of the Rig

Veda, the portion of the text in print, has been translated and published by myself. M. Langlois, of Paris, has published a French translation of the whole. German criticism is not satisfied with either of our performances, and we shall no doubt soon have a version in that language more congenial to the speculative spirit which renders German scholars such unsafe guides, in spite of their unquestioned learning and indefatigable industry.

Sanscrit literature in other departments has not been very assiduously cultivated in this country. The text and translation of a drama—the Vikramorvasi—have been printed; the text by Professor Williams, the translation by Mr. Cowell. A very useful work, a dictionary (English and Sanscrit), has been published by Professor Williams, which will be a great help, not only to the study of the language, but to translators of European works, and of the sacred Scriptures especially, not only into Sanscrit, but also into the vernacular Indian dialects, which depend entirely upon Sanscrit for the expression of new and unfamiliar ideas. At Paris, the excellent edition of the Ramayana, edited by Professor Gorresio, and published at the expense of the King of Sardinia, is completed in five handsome volumes, to which the editor has added two of his Italian translations. The text of the Mimansa Sutras of Jaimini, very handsomely printed, is in progress at Berlin, edited by Dr. Goldstücker, who has also engaged to publish a translation of the Mahabharata, and, in concert with myself, a new edition of my Dictionary, to be published at Berlin. At Breslau Professor Stenzler has reprinted the text of the Laws of Yajnavalkya—the text of the work well known in India as the Mitakshara, the chief legal authority everywhere, except in Bengal; and from Leipsic we have just received a new Sanscrit Grammar by Professor Benfey. An interesting series of works has been printed at Athens, in which we have the two most perfect forms of speech brought into friendly contact, Sanscrit and Greek; and the language of Homer and Herodotus is employed to interpret that of Bhartri Hari and Vyasa. A Greek gentleman, a man of letters, Demetrius Galanus, lived many years and died at Benares: during his residence there he amused his leisure with the study of Sanscrit and the translation of several Sanscrit works into classical Greek. On his death his papers were sent to Athens, where the translations of the Balabharata Itihasa Samuchchaya, the Bhagavad Gita, and Satakas of Bhartri-hari have been printed under the care of M. Typaldos, the Superintendant of the Public Library. The metamorphosis of Sanscrit into Greek presents nothing strange or unnatural. As illustrative of the present religious practices of the Hindus I may notice a series of delineations

by Madame Belnos, published under the patronage of the Court of Directors, representing the attitudes of the Brahmans in the performance of their daily devotions ; attitudes we have most of us often witnessed, but of which a definite notion could be formed only through such a graphic description as this work supplies.

Connected with the literature and religion of India is the continued investigation of the purport of those inscriptions in an early form of the Nagari alphabet, which are found on columns and rocks, and in the excavated temples in various parts of India, as we look to them almost exclusively for the chance of clearing up the obscurity which envelops the condition of India between the Macedonian invasion and the first centuries after Christianity. Inscriptions on copperplates, of which also numbers are found, afford valuable glimpses of the interval between the latter period and the Mohammadan conquest ; but both classes still require further investigation. The last number of the Society's Journal contains some interesting contributions from the older class of inscriptions from Ceylon and from Central India, particularly from the remarkable Buddhist structures at Sanchi, near Bhilsa, where Major Cunningham has discovered the names of some of the first propagators of Buddhism. A more full account of his discoveries is on its way home, as well as a separate description, illustrated by numerous drawings by Lieut. Maisey, who has been employed by the Government of India especially to carry on inquiries into the monuments of antiquity, under instructions emanating from the Home Authorities.

The last number also of the Journal of the Bombay Branch Society contains translations of inscriptions of the second class ; one set, translated by Major Jacob, containing further and valuable notices of the Chalukya princes of Western India, and one translated by the Rev. Mr. Anderson, recording the succession of several princes of the Valabhi dynasty, of whose grants other similar records occur, by which their origin may be traced to the second century. The ruins of their capital, Valabhipura, have been lately discovered, and are described by Dr. Nicholson in our last Journal. The history of this state may, perhaps, receive some additional illustration when the great Jain work, the *Satrunjaya Mahatmya*, the Golden Legend of the *Satrunjaya*, or *Girnar Mountain*, shall have been translated. Of the *Cave Temple Inscriptions* some have been collected by Colonel Sykes and Mr. Stevenson, and many are published by Dr. Bird in his *Historical Researches*, and translations of some of them have been attempted, but it may be doubted if we can yet place much reliance on either the transcripts or the translations. The former evidently require collation before they can be satisfactorily interpreted. The

services of a scholar, well acquainted with Sanscrit and with the modifications of the Nagari alphabet found in India, are required, who may compare the transcripts with the originals on the spot, and verify or correct them; at the same time that he takes careful copies of such as have not yet been transcribed. We shall then be competent to determine whether they are capable of being translated in an intelligible and unexceptionable manner. The inscriptions will then possibly serve to explain, as well as be explained by, the very curious paintings which decorate the walls and roofs of the cave-temples of Ajunta, and of which, as far as they have survived the corrosive influences of time and exposure, copies taken by Captain Gill, under the authority of the Government of Madras, are still in the course of arrival from India and are deposited at the India House. They have attracted the notice of several distinguished artists as specimens of art at an early date, about the beginning of Christianity, and they are full of interest as representations of manners and costume, and upon the whole as evidences of the predominance of Buddhism at the same period. In most of them the figures of Sakya Sinha and of Buddhist teachers are conspicuous, and the incidents are probably taken from legends once current, perhaps still extant in Buddhist literature, of his miracles and adventures; of the opposition he encountered and the encouragement he received. In some of the paintings last received we have him blessing elephants and horses, and healing the sick and giving sight to the blind. In one very large painting we have in one part of it the ceremony of the Abhisheka, or royal inauguration, whilst the rest is occupied by a battle, in which the party overthrown appears to consist entirely of women who are assailed by men on foot, on horseback, in boats, and on elephants, with swords, lances, bows and arrows, and are defending themselves, not with those arms with which nature has endowed them, but with swords and spears, and clubs and missiles. Sooth to say, their natural defences are not of a very irresistible description, for they are represented mostly as hideous old hags, with shock heads of reddish hair. The existence of a Stri-raja, or empire of women, is alluded to in the epic poems of the Hindus; but the site is usually placed in the north-east, or Asam and Butan, not in the south, where these paintings originate; and we have no account of the martial propensities of the fair rulers or their subjects.

Besides the laudable efforts which are being made in India to preserve the memorials of antiquity, very meritorious activity prevails there in the promotion of Sanscrit literature. Foremost amongst its results we may place the completion of a voluminous Sanscrit Lexicon, by Raja Radha Kant Deb, a native gentleman of Calcutta, of

the highest respectability, and well known as combining a devoted attachment to the institutions and religion of his country, with a liberal participation in all public measures for improving the education of his countrymen by the efficient cultivation of the English language, and European literature and science. Opposed, in some respects, to the party which Radha Kant represents, is an association in Calcutta called the *Tatwa-bodhini Sabhá*, or Truth-expounding Society, following out the views of Raja Rammohun Rai and other reformers, and promoting them by the publication of original monotheistic works, the Vedas, the Vedanta, and other philosophical systems. The Asiatic Society of Bengal, the venerable parent of all Asiatic Societies, begins, it is to be feared, to exhibit symptoms of advanced age; but the Journal continues to be published, and often contains papers of much interest. With the aid of the Bengal Government also the Society proceeds with the *Bibliotheca Indica*, a collection of original texts in an economical form, thus conferring upon Oriental literature an inestimable boon, by placing within the reach of orientalists in Europe works which, as long as they exist in manuscript only, are either not procurable at all, or are to be consulted only by a distant and expensive journey to London and Oxford, Paris, Berlin, or Vienna. The example thus set by the Asiatic Society of Calcutta is about to be followed by that of Paris. At Benares, also, the most commendable activity is exhibited in connexion with the improvements of native education, under the intelligent and experienced supervision of Dr. Ballantyne, the Principal of the Benares College. To this we owe the publication of the text and translation of an original Sanscrit Grammar, the *Laghu Siddhanta Kaumudi*, and the announcement of the publication of the great source of all Sanscrit grammar, the aphorisms of Panini, with the most celebrated commentaries. The main object of Dr. Ballantyne's labours is, however, to familiarize the rising generation of the Brahmans especially, with the philosophical doctrines of Europe in concurrence or contrast with their own metaphysics and logic, and with this view he has published *Lectures on the Nyaya, Vedanta, and Sankhya systems*, comparing their doctrines with those of Aristotle, Wheatley, Berkeley, and Mill, and the *Sutras*, or dogmatic principles of the six philosophical systems of India, both texts and translations; the object being twofold—to make, on the one hand, those Brahmans who study Sanscrit solely or principally, aware that the subjects to which they attach most value are as well or better understood in Europe, and, on the other, to render those who are studying English conversant also with their own philosophical systems: the two classes will then be able to discuss and compare their

respective notions, to the improvement of both, instead of being, as they are at present, mutually unintelligible. It is only by being doubly armed that the native English scholar can hope to exercise any influence whatever upon his countrymen, or extend beyond his own person the benefits of enlightened cultivation. To expect to accomplish the diffusion of knowledge in India through English alone, were as reasonable as to expect that a cripple, deprived of the use of both his legs, should hobble along upon a single crutch.

Although not altogether idle, European scholars in India have not of late done much for Oriental literature; yet there is much to do, especially in consequence of the recent accessions to our territory; and grammars and dictionaries of the dialects of the Punjab and frontier districts are essential to the due discharge of public duty. The only recent contributions to the literature of these regions are a Dictionary, English and Punjabee, by Captain Starkey, and the translation of the *Vichitra Nátaka*, one of the scriptural books of the Sikhs, by Captain Siddons. In the south, a new edition of Major Molesworth's Marathi Dictionary is in progress, as is a new dictionary of Telugu, by Mr. Charles Brown. To Mohammedan literature an important contribution has been commenced by Dr. Sprenger, in a new and authentic life of Mohammad, of which the first part is published. The slackness of European exertion is in some degree compensated by the activity of native scholars, who are beginning to make abundant use of the agency of the press, of which they have learned the application from their English masters. Through the whole extent of the Company's territories printing-presses have been set up, not only for the circulation of intelligence, or for missionary and educational objects, but for the multiplication and diffusion of standard literature. A great impulse has been given to the publication of Arabic, Persian, and Hindustani compositions by the use of lithography, which is better suited to the characters of those languages than moveable types. Of the productions of the lithographic press, in little more than a twelvemonth, there have been recently sent to the library of the India House one hundred and thirteen works, executed at Agra, Delhi, Benares, Meerut, and Cawnpore. On former occasions, proportionably numerous works have been sent from Bareilly and Lucknow. Some of these are translations of English books; but the far greater number are the works that are most highly esteemed by the natives, the compositions of celebrated writers on grammar, logic, metaphysics, medicine, poetry, law, and religion. The Mohammadans especially have published a number of controversial works, in explanation and vindication of their creed, and various collections of their most venerated traditions. The

dispatch of books I have just alluded to included no fewer than three editions of the Koran, two with interlinear translations in Urdu. Now I remember the time when the Maulavis of Calcutta looked upon the printing of the Koran as a profane desecration of the sacred volume, and were as jealous of its being translated into any vernacular dialect as the Church of Rome ever was of the translation of the Bible into the vulgar tongue. In Bengal and the South of India a like active multiplication of popular works, chiefly poetical, and translations from Sanscrit, is taking place. There is nowhere much attempt at originality, but the constant employment of the press indicates a state of mental fermentation, which, like the Indian churning of the ocean, may in due season bring jewels to the surface—the gems of creative fancy and independent thought.

Voyaging from India towards China, we meet with similar signs of the progress of improvement. The Journal of the Indian Archipelago, printed at Singapore, is full of valuable information respecting the people, the languages, and literature of the Malay peninsula and adjacent islands. At Maulmain, the press is busy with educational works, in the language of Burma; and from Siam we have a new grammar of Siamese, by M. de Pallegoix, Vicar Apostolic in Siam, which is interesting not only from its inherent usefulness, but from its being printed at Bangkok, the capital of Siam. In an appendix, the author adds a view of the state of Buddhism amongst the Siamese, and gives a list of the writings current in the kingdom. The religious works alone amount to three thousand six hundred and eighty-three volumes. In this country, a valuable contribution towards facilitating the acquirement of the language of the Malays has recently appeared in a dictionary of that language, in the Roman alphabet, by Mr. Crawford, whose long and intimate acquaintance with the Eastern Archipelago, manifested in the important works he has heretofore published respecting them, furnishes ample assurance that the compilation will be of essential service to those to whom a knowledge of Malay is an object of necessity or interest. At Java, the Transactions of the Batavian Society, which began more than half a century ago, have merged into the *Tijdschrift voor Neêrlandisch Indië*, published in Holland, and relating entirely to the Dutch possessions in the Archipelago. The Government of Holland has of late years been munificently liberal in its encouragement of publications illustrative of the philology, statistics, and policy of its Eastern territories; and works relating to them are constantly put forth, unfortunately mostly in the Dutch language. The magnificent work on Japan, the *Nipon and Fauna Japonica* of Colonel Siebold, which is another

example of the patronage of the Crown, is in German: the work is yet unfinished.

The language and literature of China have always enjoyed more consideration with foreign nations than our own; and France in particular has almost monopolised this branch of Oriental cultivation. We are not, it is true, wholly without Chinese scholars, and we may boast of two at least who have deserved and earned a European reputation, in Sir John Davis and Sir G. Staunton; but we may regret that they do not appear to have any worthy successors, now that they have acquired the privilege of reposing under their laurels. It is otherwise at Paris, although they have lately lost in M. Edouard Biot a distinguished Chinese scholar, who has left a valuable posthumous work in his translation of the Chiü Li, or Institutes of the Chiu, the administrative organization of the empire in the twelfth century (it is said) B.C., under the Chiu dynasty, the principles of which, according to the translator, still regulate the practice of the Government. M. Pavie has published the translation of the second volume of the San-koue-chi, or *L'Histoire des Trois Royaumes*; and M. Hervey, an account of Chinese horticulture and agriculture, from the *Encyclopedia of Agriculture*, compiled under the orders of the Emperor Kien-lung. Those who are interested in the history of India, however, look with anxious anticipation to the translation by M. Jullien of the travels of Hwan Tsang in India in the sixth and seventh centuries: it is said to be completed, but awaits some supplementary dissertations, as on the Buddhist chronology and the concordance of Sanscrit and Chinese names. In the mean time, a fragmentary memoir of Hwan Tsang, translated by M. Jullien, has been communicated by him to the French Academy, and is separately printed. It is of a very legendary—that is, of a very mendacious—character, and is not calculated to inspire any prepossession in favour of the authenticity of Hwan Tsang's travels.

I have thus attempted to place before you what may be termed a bird's-eye view of the principal contributions to Oriental literature during the last year or two. To have been more minute would have taxed your patience too severely, and I have been obliged to pass over many subjects of interest holding a subsidiary place, and especially the shorter, but not less valuable, communications which have been printed in our own *Journal*, in the *Journals* of the branch Societies of Madras and Bombay, in the *Journal* of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and that of the Indian Archipelago, in the *Journal Asiatique* of Paris, the *Zeitschrift* of the Oriental Society of Germany, the *Indische Studien* of Professor Weber, the *Journal* of the American

Oriental Society, and the Transactions of the Academies of Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Munich, and St. Petersburg,—in all which valuable communications on subjects of Oriental literature are to be met with, of the existence of which the public in this country is scarcely or not at all aware. As long as this is the case—as long as English Society is so incurious with respect to Oriental Literature—it need not be matter of surprise that the numbers and the labours of English Oriental scholars should be overshadowed by the much more imposing array of Continental Orientalists. The healthy stimulus of public approbation is here almost wholly wanting. Yet it is not to be imagined that the Orientalists of France or Germany find in the public at large many more individuals than amongst ourselves to take a delight in the translated specimens of Arabian, Indian, or Chinese talent. The literary taste of the majority is no doubt much the same abroad that it is here. General readers, whether German or French, have also their *David Copperfields* and *Vanity Fairs*, highly flavoured fictions, which render the plain food of sober facts insipid and distasteful to the intellectual appetite. Where, then, consists the difference? Why do the Continental presses teem with Oriental publications, texts, and translations, when in this country they cannot find a publisher? We may trace it to various causes, and in a great degree to the encouragement given by foreign governments, not merely by actual pecuniary aid, but by the multiplication of professorial chairs, and by the grant of personal distinctions to eminent Oriental scholars. The Government of this country has never been remarkable for the patronage of any description of literature, and it is not surprising, therefore, that Oriental literature should have shared the general neglect; the late administration of Lord John Russell, however, is entitled to the acknowledgments of our Society in having enabled us, by a liberal grant, to defray the cost of printing Colonel Rawlinson's researches. A solitary instance of this nature forms no material exception, however, to the imputation of want of encouragement on the part of the Government as one cause of the inferiority of England to other countries in the cultivation of Oriental letters. A still more efficient cause, however, is the existence on the Continent of a literary, or perhaps I should say, a learned public, formed of a sufficient body of scholars and men of letters, who are engaged and interested in something better than the ephemeral literature of the passing hour, or the circumscribed area of local and occasional topics—in the investigation of the productions of the human mind, in all times and in all countries—in the study of universal man. Such a public we also ought to have. There is no lack amongst us

of men of scholarly attainments, and of cultivated understandings, who might be expected to interest themselves in the contemplation of every diversity of intellectual development. It has happened, however, partly from the course of our early education, and partly from long-cherished prepossessions, that scholarship with us has rarely deviated from the beaten track of classical study, and has thought little worthy of attention except the literature of Greece and Rome. That the preference is well placed need not be disputed; but preference need not have been exclusiveness. Without in the least depreciating the superior excellence of Latin and Greek, men of studious habits and inquiring minds may be assured that they will find much to reward research, much to gratify taste, much to interest, much to enlighten in the languages and literature of the East.

